

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----271441Z 131070 /43

R 271200Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 014
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T CAIRO 17750

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR US SU
SUBJ: FAHMY QUERY RE US POLICY TOWARDS SUDAN

1. AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE, FAHMY SUMMONED ME ON CHRISTMAS DAY. ONE OF THE SUBJECTS HE WISHED TO DISCUSS WAS THE SUDAN. HE PROFESSED TO BE PUZZLED ABOUT OUR POLICY TOWARD THE SUDAN AND ASKED FOR A CLEAR STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT. WHOM DO WE SUPPORT IN THE SUDAN? BOTH SSADAT AND HE, FAHMY CLAIMED, DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IN THE SUDAN.

2. ALLUDING TO ALLEGED TRADITIONAL US SUPPORT FOR THE MAHDI FAMILY (WHICH HE HAS OFTEN CHARGED), FAHMY READ ME A REPORT PURPORTEDLY GIVEN THE EGYPTIANS BY AN UNIDENTIFIED INFORMANT WHO WAS DESCRIBED ONLY AS "ONE OF THE MAHDI PEOPLE." THE INFORMANT CLAIMED THAT THREE LIBYANS--SALAH AL-DURAH (LIBYAN INTELLIGENCE SPECIALIST FOR SUDAN), ABU ZAID DARDARI (LIBYAN SECURITY CHIEF) AND SOMEONE NAMED AL-ZAWI (NOT IDENTIFIED)--RECENTLY MET IN LIVERPOOL WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI, SHERIF HUSSEIN HINDI, AHMED ZAIN AL ABDIN
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AND OMAR NUR EL-DAYIM TO DISCUSS NEW PLANS AGAINST THE NUMEIRI GOVT. MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIAN INFORMANT, THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY "THREE AMERICANS FROM CIA," ONE OF WHOSE NAMES WAS GIVEN AS COGAN. THE SUDANESE DELEGATION, REPORTEDLY SUPPORTED BY THE AMERICANS, HAD WISHED TO CONVINCE THE LIBYANS TO EARMARK LARGE SUMS

OF MONEY FOR SUPERVISION IN THE SUDAN. FAHMY SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THE REPORT, BUT IN VIEW OF ITS SERIOUSNESS FELT HE HAD TO APPRISE US OF IT.

3. I TOLD FAHMY I WAS GLAD THAT HE HIMSELF DOUBTED THE REPORT. HAD HE BELIEVED IT, I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT HE HAD BEEN READING TOO MANY SPY STORIES LATELY. I HAD TO INFORMATION ABOUT SUCH A MEETING, BUT I COULD CONFIDENTLY ASSURE HIM THERE IS NO USG ACTIVITY, OVERT OR COVERT, DIRECTED AGAINST PRESIDENT NUMEIRI. ON THE CONTRARY, NUMEIRI HAS RECENTLY VISITED THE UNITED STATES AND THE USG HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR WAYS OF SUPPORTING HIM. WE HAD DISCUSSED WITH OUR EGYPTIAN FRIENDS THE WHOLE MATTER OF SUPPORT FOR NUMEIRI LAST SUMMER, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ABORTIVE REVOLUTION. OUR AMBASSADOR IN KHARTOUM IS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE SUDANESE GOVT TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP. IT WAS RIDICULOUS TO SUGGEST THAT WE ARE SUPPORTING NUMEIRI WITH ONE HAND AND HIS OPPONENTS WITH THE OTHER.

4. FAHMY REITERATED THAT HE WAS SURE THE REPORT WAS WRONG, BUT AGAIN ASKED FOR A STATEMENT OF OUR POLICY AND OUR CONTACTS WITH THE SUDAN. WITH WHOM ARE OUR PEOPLE DEALING? I TOLD HIM THAT IT HAS NEVER BEEN A QUESTION OF DROPPING THE MAHDI SINCE WE HAVE NEVER SUPPORTED HIM AGAINST NUMEIRI OR THE LEGITIMATE GOVT OF THE SUDAN. THIS PROMPTED FAHMY TO COMMENT THAT THE SAUDIS SUPPORT THE MAHDI AND HE WONDERED IF THEY MAY HAVE PERSUADED US TO DO LIKEWISE. I RECALLED THAT DURING MY TIME IN SAUDI ARABIA, THE SAUDIS HAD INDEED SUPPORTED THE MAHDI AT A TIME WHEN THE CENTRAL GOVT IN KHARTOUM WAS LEFTIST
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ORIENTED. I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SAUDIS WERE STILL DOING SO, BUT NOTED THEY HAVE RECENTLY ALSO PROVIDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO NUMEIRI. IF THE EGYPTIANS HAVE ANY QUESTION ON THIS SCORE, WHY NOT ASK THE SAUDIS DIRECTLY? FAHMY SAID HE INTENDS TO DO SO, BUT REPEATEDLY STRESSED GOE SENSITIVITY TO SUDANESE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE NEED FOR BOTH GOE AND USG TO SEEK WAYS OF STRENGTHENING NUMEIRI.

5. REQUEST DEPT PROVIDE STATEMENT TO BE GIVEN TO GOE ON OUR CURRENT POLICY AND ACTIVITIES IN THE SUDAN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO17750
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760472-1092
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761211/aaaaaixx.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 FEB 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FAHMY QUERY RE US POLICY TOWARDS SUDAN
TAGS: PFOR, US, SU, EG, CIA, (FAHMY, ISMAIL), (NUMAYRI, JA'FAR MUHAMMAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006